

12TH STATE OF THE BAY SYMPOSIUM AGENDA | DAY 1 | 02.24.26

7:30 – 8:30 a.m. | Registration

8:30 – 10:00 a.m. | Day One Opening Plenary Session (Exhibit Hall A)

Welcome by Galveston Bay Estuary Program, Lisa M. Marshall, Program Manager | Welcome Address by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Troy Hill, Water Division Director | Address by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Catarina Gonzales, Commissioner | Panel: Water Rights (National Wildlife Federation, Texas Water Trade, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Tributary Consulting)

10:00 – 10:30 a.m. | Morning Break - Opportunity to network and visit the exhibits and poster presentations (Exhibit Hall B)

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Concurrent Session I

Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
<p>State of the Bay: Multiple Stressor Challenges and their Impacts on Galveston Bay Region and its Ecosystems</p> <p>Impacts on Water and Sediment Quality Hanadi Rifai, University of Houston</p> <p>Ecosystem Protection and Preservation Bob Stokes, Galveston Bay Foundation</p> <p>Impacts on Ecosystems Antoinetta Quigg, Texas A&M University Galveston</p> <p>Opportunities for Ecosystem Resilience to Extreme Heat Erin Kinney, Houston Advanced Research Center</p> <p>Nature-Based Solutions to Flood Control and Flood Resilience Jonathan Holley, Harris County Flood Control District</p> <p>Ecosystem Service Provisioning in Restored Salt Marshes: Changes Over Time Anna Armitage, Texas A&M University Galveston</p>	<p>Legacy, Emerging Chemical and Biological Contaminants in Aquatic Ecosystems Part I</p> <p>Nano- and Microplastics in Marine Ecosystems: Sediment to Seafood Bryan Gahn, Texas A&M University Galveston</p> <p>Current State and Historic Trends in Persistent (PAHs, PCBs) and Emerging Pollutant (Nano(Micro) plastics of NMPs) Body-Burdens in Oysters and Fish from Galveston Bay Astif Mortuza, Texas A&M University Galveston</p> <p>Establishing a Research Framework and Baseline Conditions to Support Assessments of Cumulative Effects from Multiple Stressors in Galveston Bay Dolphins Vanessa Mintzer, Galveston Bay Foundation</p>	<p>Creating and Maintaining Strong Partnerships for Education and Engagement</p> <p>Creating and Maintaining Strong Partnerships Cindy Wilems, Galveston Bay Foundation Alicia Mein-Johnson, Harris County Precinct 3</p> <p>Tools of Engagement Research-Based Strategies for Community Messaging, Outreach, and Engagement Andrea Tantillo, Houston-Galveston Area Council</p>	<p>Building Bird Habitats</p> <p>High Island Rookery Resilience and Enhancement: 7 Years Later Pete Deichmann, Houston Audubon</p> <p>Restoration and Community Engagement: The Wulfert Bird Nesting Habitat Project Elise Cormier and Marijke Maxwell, TetraTech</p> <p>Building Resilience for Rookery Islands: Long-Term Waterbird Population Trends on North Deer Island Tim Forrester, Audubon Texas</p> <p>Enhancing Eastern Black Rail Habitat in Gulf Coast Marshes: The Role of Vegetation Management Trevor Markwood, Texas A&M University</p>

12:00 – 1:15 p.m. | Luncheon (Exhibit Hall A), Keynote Speaker - Marcus Eriksen, 5 Gyres

1:30 – 3:00 p.m. | Concurrent Session II

Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
<p>Collaborative Conservation Through Natural Resource Damage Assessments</p> <p>Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration in Galveston Bay Michael Cave, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</p> <p>NRDA Sea Turtle Restoration on the Upper Texas Coast: Sea Turtle Nest Monitoring, Sea Turtle Rescue, Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Marine Debris Removal Chris Marshall, Texas A&M University Galveston</p> <p>Construction and Monitoring of Dickinson Bay Bird Island 2 Jeffrey Fato, Galveston Bay Foundation</p> <p>Continued Placement of Beneficial Use Material at Pierce Marsh Sally Clark, Galveston Bay Foundation</p>	<p>Improving Water Quality in Galveston Bay with Healthy Soil and Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Improving Water Quality in Galveston Bay with Healthy Soil and Green Infrastructure Charriss York, Texas A&M AgriLife</p> <p>Brian Koch, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board</p> <p>Kelli Ondracek, City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department</p> <p>Brittani Flowers, Bayou Preservation Association</p> <p>Texas-Based Ecosystem Service Valuation for Benefit-Cost Analysis of Nature-Based Solutions Michael Niebuhr, Texas A&M AgriLife</p>	<p>Community Engagement with Birds</p> <p>How we Help the Birds: A Look at Bird-Friendly Actions Taken by Community Members Schyler Brown, Houston Audubon</p> <p>Where Birds Thrive, People Prosper: Creating Resilient Communities Through Bird City Texas Certification Chloe Crumley, Audubon Texas</p> <p>Filling in the Gaps: Using Houston Audubon Urban Bird Surveys to Improve the Quality of Community Science Datasets Schyler Brown, Houston Audubon</p> <p>Beach Nesting Bird Conservation on the Upper Texas Coast: Stabilizing and Increasing Populations Through Habitat Protection, Population Monitoring, and Public Outreach Sarah Belles, American Bird Conservancy</p>	<p>Oysters</p> <p>Management Strategies for Oyster Recovery and Fishery Sustainability in Galveston Bay Christine Jensen, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</p> <p>Lessons Learned from Adaptively Managing an Oyster Reef Impacted by Sedimentation Kathy Sweezy, The Nature Conservancy</p> <p>The Galveston Bay Foundation's Oyster Shell Recycling Program: 14 Years of Growth and Future Goals Shannon Batte, Galveston Bay Foundation</p> <p>Sentinel Program to Track Perkinsus marinus in Oysters of Galveston Bay George Guillen, University of Houston Clear Lake</p>

3:00 – 3:45 p.m. | Dedicated Poster Presentation Session and Afternoon Break (Exhibit Hall B)

3:45 – 5:00 p.m. | Concurrent Session III

Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
<p>Panel: Caring for Trinity Bay: Building an Interagency Partnership to Evaluate and Remove Aging Oil & Gas Infrastructure</p> <p>D'Anne Stites, Texas General Land Office</p> <p>Brent Koza, Texas General Land Office</p> <p>Ryan Lytle, Texas General Land Office</p> <p>Cody Heath, Texas Railroad Commission</p>	<p>Land Conservation</p> <p>Land Protection Efforts in the Galveston Bay Watershed Matt Singer, Galveston Bay Foundation</p> <p>Land Acquisition for Habitat Conservation and Environmental Education Lindsey Savage, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department</p> <p>Armand Bayou Nature Center – Urban Acquisition and Conservation Timothy Pylate, Armand Bayou Nature Center</p> <p>Increasing the Pace of Conservation in Southeast Texas: Challenges and Opportunities Mary Anne Piacentini, Coastal Prairie Conservancy</p>	<p>Exploration Green: A Nature-Based Solution for Stormwater Management in Houston, TX</p> <p>Christie Taylor, Texas A&M AgriLife and Exploration Green Conservancy</p> <p>Jennifer Morrow, Clear Lake City Water Authority</p> <p>Matt Forster, Clear Lake City Water Authority</p> <p>Abigail Stanhouse, LAN Engineering</p> <p>Rich Sommer, Exploration Green Conservancy</p>	<p>Wetland Connections Workshop</p> <p>Cindy Wilems, Galveston Bay Foundation</p> <p>Emily Billin, Galveston Bay Foundation</p> <p>Rachel Sunshine, Galveston Bay Foundation</p>

5:00 p.m. | Evening Reception (Room A4)



We've included several sessions focused on avian conservation, which plays a vital role in our area. These sessions are hosted in collaboration with Houston Audubon.



Houston Audubon Hosted Session



12TH STATE OF THE BAY SYMPOSIUM AGENDA | DAY 2 | 02.25.26

7:30 – 8:30 a.m. | Morning Networking

8:30 – 10:00 a.m. | Day Two Opening Plenary Session (Exhibit Hall A)

Welcome by Galveston Bay Council, Vance Darr, Chair | Address by City of Galveston, Craig Brown, Mayor | Address by Galveston Bay Foundation, Bob Stokes, President | Presentation: Paul Montagna (Harte Research Institute)

10:00 – 10:30 a.m. | Morning Break – Opportunity to network and visit the exhibits and poster presentations (Exhibit Hall B)

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Concurrent Session IV

Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
<p>Living Shorelines in the Galveston Bay System: Status, Considerations, and Long-Term Results</p> <p>Living Shorelines in the Galveston Bay System: Status, Considerations, and Long-Term Results</p> <p>Jim Dobberstine, Lee College</p> <p>Cindy Howard, University of Houston Clear Lake</p> <p>Jeffrey Fato, Galveston Bay Foundation</p> <p>Evaluating Saltmarshes as a Nature-Based Solution to Microplastic Pollution</p> <p>Lydia Thurman, University of Houston Clear Lake</p>	<p>Panel: Watershed-Based Planning and Implementation</p> <p>Steven Johnston, Houston-Galveston Area Council</p> <p>Rachel Windham, Houston-Galveston Area Council</p> <p>Celina Gauthier Lowry, Texas A&M AgriLife</p> <p>Lucas F. Gregory, Texas Water Resources Institute</p> <p>Natasha Zarnstorff, Galveston Bay Foundation</p> <p>Nicole Hall, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</p>	<p>eDNA Biomonitoring in Galveston Bay</p> <p>Yasmina Shah Esmaelli, Texas A&M University Galveston</p> <p>Guilherme Corte, Texas A&M University Galveston</p> <p>Jaelyn Rodriguez, Texas A&M University Galveston</p>	<p>Flora and Fauna of Galveston Bay</p> <p>Morphometrics, Population Structure, and Spatial Distribution of Diamondback Terrapin in Texas Estuaries Mandi Gordon, University of Houston Clear Lake</p> <p>Seagrass Community in West Bay and Christmas Bay: 2016 - 2024 Laura Ryckman, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</p> <p>Evaluation of Microplastic Loading in Marsh Habitats Associated with Texas Diamondback Terrapins (Malaclemys terrapin littoralis)</p> <p>Gabrielle Hammerbach, University of Houston Clear Lake</p> <p>Movement and Habitat Use of Green Sea Turtles in the Galveston Bay Estuary System Madelyn Rupp, Texas A&M University Galveston</p>

12:00 – 1:15 p.m. | Luncheon (Exhibit Hall A), Keynote Speaker - Matt Aeberhard, Birds of America

1:30 – 3:00 p.m. | Concurrent Session V

Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
<p>Water and Sediment Quality Monitoring and Management</p> <p>Coastal Groundwater Dynamics in Galveston Bay Dini Adyasari, Texas A&M University Galveston</p> <p>Application of Matrix-Assisted Laser Desorption/Ionization Time-of-Flight Mass Spec to Detect the Source of Enterococcus Contamination of Mustang Bayou</p> <p>Chris Howard, University of Houston Clear Lake</p> <p>Targeted Bacteria Monitoring: A Holistic Overview of the Houston-Galveston Area Council's Projects Cornell Evans, Houston-Galveston Area Council</p> <p>Developing a TMDL for a Stormwater-dominated Recreational Beach Sam Bickley, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality</p>	<p>Community-Based Water Quality Initiatives</p> <p>Clean Coast Texas: Providing Coastal Communities with Technical Assistance to Protect and Restore Water Quality Scott Jones, Texas A&M AgriLife</p> <p>Enhancing On-Site Sewage Facility Outreach and Improvements on a Community Level with GIS-Based Tools and Local Partners</p> <p>Kendall Guidroz, Houston-Galveston Area Council</p> <p>Public Awareness of Waterborne Pathogen Risk from Recreational Exposure: Insights from Galveston Beach Survey Ashley Ross, Texas A&M University Galveston</p> <p>Water Quality, Debris, and Citizen Scientists in Galveston Bay Natasha Zarnstorff, Galveston Bay Foundation and Liz Virgl, American Bird Conservancy</p>	<p>Data/Modeling</p> <p>Texas Clean Rivers Program Regional Water Resources Information Map Jenny Oakley, Houston-Galveston Area Council</p> <p>Galveston Bay Regional Monitoring Database: What Can It Do For You? Ryan Bare, Houston Advanced Research Center</p> <p>Next Steps in Estuarine Habitat Suitability Modeling in Galveston Bay: Integrating Process-Based and Data Driven Approaches</p> <p>Ryan Hostak, TetraTech</p> <p>Land Cover Forecasting for the HGAC Region using TerrSet Durga Joshi, Houston-Galveston Area Council</p> <p>Leveraging the Texas Litter Database for Citizen Science and Watershed Stewardship</p> <p>Kirsten Sorensen, Keep Texas Beautiful</p>	<p>Historic and Future Bird Trends</p> <p>Enhancing Habitat and Birdlife on the Bolivar Peninsula: A Historical Perspective Wyatt Egelhoff, Houston Audubon</p> <p>Avian Conservation Initiatives at the Houston Zoo: Building for a Sustainable Future in Zoological Agriculture Programs and Global Conservation</p> <p>Ric Urban, Houston Zoo</p> <p>60 Years of Avian Surveillance Within Harris County Mosquito and Vector Control Elise Nishikawa, Harris County Mosquito and Vector Control</p> <p>Roseate Spoonbill in Galveston Bay: Apparent Trends in Breeding Population Wyatt Egelhoff, Houston Audubon</p> <p>The State of the Attwater's Prairie Chicken (Tymanuchus cupido attwateri) in Texas and the AZA SAFE Conservation Initiative Kyle McAuliffe, Houston Zoo</p>

3:00 – 3:45 p.m. | Afternoon Break - Opportunity to network and visit the exhibits and poster presentations (Exhibit Hall B)

3:45 – 5:00 p.m. | Concurrent Session VI

Floral Ballroom A1	Floral Ballroom A2	Room 3	Room 4
<p>Habitat Restoration and Enhancement</p> <p>Native Plant Program for Lower Galveston Bay Watershed Ricci Simmons, Galveston Bay Foundation</p> <p>Construction and Monitoring of Dollar Bay-Moses Lake Marsh Terraces</p> <p>Jeffrey Fato, Galveston Bay Foundation</p> <p>An Upstream Piece of Galveston Bay's Ecosystem: Findings from an Urban Park's Native Habitat Restoration Courtney Hall, Memorial Park Conservancy</p> <p>Building Ecological Resilience Through Urban Restoration and Community Science at the Houston Arboretum & Nature Center</p> <p>Nova Morales, Houston Arboretum & Nature Center</p>	<p>Legacy, Emerging Chemical and Biological Contaminants in Aquatic Ecosystems Part II</p> <p>A Five-Year Observation on the Spatial and Temporal Distributions of PFAS in Galveston Bay, TX, USA Yina Liu, Texas A&M University Galveston</p> <p>PFAS in Texas and Galveston Bay Waters: Where Are We Now? Vanessa Hulse, Houston Advanced Research Center</p> <p>Applied Time Series Analyses (2000–2017) Of Vibrio Vulnificus And Vibrio Parahaemolyticus (Pathogenic and Non-Pathogenic Strains) In the Eastern Oyster, Crassostrea Virginia</p> <p>Antoinetta Quigg, Texas A&M University Galveston</p> <p>Dioxin and Polychlorinated Biphenyls: Lessons Learned From Two Decades of Monitoring, Data Analytics, and Modeling Hanadi Rifai, University of Houston</p>	<p>Connecting Communities Through Environmental Education and Outreach</p> <p>Wendy Reistle, University of Houston Clear Lake</p> <p>Debbie Bush, University of Houston Clear Lake</p>	<p>Dolphins</p> <p>From Flood to Lesion: Bottlenose Dolphins as Early Indicators of Estuarine Change Lola Renauer, University of South Carolina</p> <p>Galveston Bay's Urban Bottlenose Dolphins: Updates on Residency and Threat Evaluation</p> <p>Melanie Rogers, University of Houston Clear Lake</p> <p>Common Bottlenose Dolphins (Tursiops truncatus) as Bioindicators of Inorganic Chemical Pollution Along the Galveston Coast Madison Hallmark, Texas A&M University Corpus Christi</p> <p>Land-Based Dolphin Surveys Conducted by Citizen Scientists: What We Have Learned about Dolphin-Fisher Interactions at Seawolf Park</p> <p>Alyssa Quackenbush, Galveston Bay Foundation</p>

5:15 – 7:00 p.m. | Post-Symposium Session - NRDA Public Meeting (Floral Ballroom A1)



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Houston Audubon Hosted Session

